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How to Reinvent Yourself

IN THE MOOD for a fresh start? A new year can do that to you, inciting all sorts of internal reflections about your life, from your career to your wardrobe and everything in between. Don't be too quick to hit the reset button, though. Think of reinvention as an ongoing evolution of growth—you don't have to pull a full-on Madonna every three years. All that matters is that you express your (true) self.

PHOTOGRAPHY: CEEN WARREN

Well rounded

Can one weekend change your life? Olivia Stren goes to a Goop summit to find out.

IT'S 8:30 A.M. ON A SATURDAY, and syrupy fall sunshine is filtering into Vancouver's Stanley Park Pavilion. I'm here for Canada's inaugural Goop summit along with 200 other women and one uncomfortable-looking man. (Men here appear to be as popular as dairy products and negative energy.) Most are Goop groupies (groopies?) in yoga gear, although there are outliers in prairie dresses and box-fresh Stan Smiths. Everyone looks like they know what chaga is, and they probably have a position on it.

Goop—Gwyneth Paltrow's 10-year-old \$250-million wellness and lifestyle conglomerate—traffics in the pursuit of a life more beautiful, more curated, more balanced, more examined, more fulfilling. It's also generally as ridiculed as it is beloved. The In Goop Health summit, a sort of League of Nations for its greatest fans, invites us to consider how even the tiniest paradigm shifts can effect giant changes in our lives. "Paradigm shift" is a favourite term in Goopland—it spikes nearly every discussion, like a sort of conversational chia seed.

The atmosphere here feels spring-loaded with hope; attendees, many at personal or professional crisis points, are in the market for a breakthrough, emanating a raw, high-stakes readiness for an "aha" moment. But what is most striking are the conversations: Small talk is skimmed away like a trans fat, and perfect strangers, bonded, it seems, by a collective quest for self-improvement, talk about their fresh divorces or struggles with sobriety as they stir powdered collagen supplements into oat-milk flat whites. In a six-minute conversation with a lovely, buoyant blond woman from Seattle, I learn about her recovery from alcoholism and her empty-nest syndrome.

This might be a good time to admit that wellness has not lately been one of my fortes. I've had what I will summarily call a very difficult year. And I've long preferred to start my day with caffeine rather than with, say, kundalini meditation or cayenne-spiked lemon water. I recently read that actress Melissa McCarthy gets up at 4:30 a.m. so that she might greet the dawn with an episode of *Knight Rider*, which seemed to me the most brilliant approach to self-care I'd ever heard and one I could get behind. But, that said, I'm all for a

paradigm shift. So, here I am, festively drinking the green juice, ready for a psychic tune-up.

So is everyone else: In a group medium reading, psychic Susan Grau communicates with some people's deceased relatives. Faces, still glowing and slick with the Goop cleanser they applied at the earlier facial session, are now taut with untold sadness. One woman talks about her mother's attempt at suicide and her father's untimely death, and another speaks of her mother's opioid addiction. People weep, shuddering with grief, and then, post-session, we're greeted by a waiter ferrying trays of "lean green colada" smoothies.

Thankfully, my mood is not the only thing about to improve—so is the rest of my life, apparently. If the past year or so has been particularly challenging, it's not my fault—it's Saturn's. I'm sitting in a small matcha-green room and psychological astrologer Jennifer Freed is reading my planetary chart. She is frighteningly accurate in her analysis of my "struggles" and cross-pollinates psychology with astrology, considering influences at once familial and cosmic in her approach. I've spent enough time on the couch to say that an hour with Freed feels like six months of conventional talk therapy condensed into a sort of chlorophyll wellness shot for my psyche. I want to believe everything she says because it's good news: Jupiter is ushering in brighter days for 2019. (Byeeee, Saturn.)

My spirits high on hope and my pores high on plant stem cells that were sustainably sourced from poet's daffodils (present in most of Goop's skincare products), I head back to my hotel. I feel great. (It may also be the B12 shot I received after the yoga class in a greenhouse.) I think about how I need the intervention of a new exercise regimen, a spiritual practice, a rose-quartz facial roller and a puff-sleeved G. Label trench coat. I think about how I should start eating coconut yogourt and practise "energetic hygiene," and I also think about how psychotherapist Barry Michels urged us to tap into our potential. Then I start to feel a scratch in my throat. By the next morning, the scratch taps into its potential (it must have attended yesterday's panel) and self-actualizes into an illness. After a 12-hour wellness marathon, I'm heading home sick. A groopie isn't built in a day. ►